GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:316
ANSWERED ON:19.11.2007
SHORTFALL IN WHEAT PROCUREMENT
Khan Shri Mohammad Tahir;Rawat Prof. Rasa Singh

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of storage capacity of wheat with the Food Corporation of India along with the quantity available therein;

(b) whether the Government has failed to purchase wheat from the local market in time;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the circumstances under which the Government had to import wheat at rates higher than the local rates; and

(e) the reasons behind the imported wheat not finding favour with the consumers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

(a): The Food Corporation of India(FCI) is having storage capacity of 23.86 millions tonnes. As on 30.9.2007, it held foodgrains stocks of 101.73 lakh tonnes.

(b) & (c): No, Sir. The procurement of wheat during the year 2007-08 is 111.27 lakh MTs as compared to 92.26 lakh MTs during last year 2006-07.

(d): In view of procurement of 111.27 lakh MTs against the estimated procurement of 151.50 lakh MTs during Rabi Marketing Season 2007-08, the Government have decided to import wheat upto 50 lakh MTs. So far 13.06 lakh MTs have been contracted for import and another 10 lakh MTs of wheat is proposed to be imported during 2007-08. The price of imported wheat is higher due to several reasons including lower production in several major wheat producing countries, diversion of wheat to biofuels, lower end year stocks and increasing demand from several countries.

(e): Because of the preference for white wheat to which consumers are used to in India, there has been resistance to imported red wheat in many States. Complaints received from two States, namely, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were investigated by drawing samples jointly with the State Government authorities and tested in State food laboratories. The samples were found to be as per specifications and fit for human consumption. The samples of imported wheat were also collected by quality control officers of the Department of Food and Public Distribution in association with FCI officers and these samples were analysed in Central Grain Analysis Laboratories, New Delhi and were found to be as per specifications laid down.